NUTRITION IN THE AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Statement to

The Food and Nutrition Board
National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council

April 1, 1966

The report by Mr. Alan Berg to the October 1965 meeting of the Food and Nutrition Board dealt with major changes in Food for Peace policies which will now emphasize improved nutritional balance in foods to be made available abroad. This development is only one consequence of the activities of the Inter-departmental Working Group on Combatting Malnutrition which has sought in additional positive ways to interpret the broad mandate for increased nutrition activities as provided for by recent Presidential directives and the A.I.D. Administrator's policy instructions. With the appointment on February 1, 1966, of a Chief of the Nutrition Branch, who is being assisted by Dr. Jacques M. May in the clinical area and Dr. Daniel Rosenfield as food technologist, hopefully more effective implementation of these new governmental and A.I.D. policies will be possible. Additional senior staff now being recruited include a senior food and nutrition scientist and a senior clinical nutritionist. A larger supporting role is visualized for the Nutrition Section, Office of International Research, National Institutes of Health.

Nutrition, defined in terms of the functions of the Branch, will cover a broad range of activities including the clinical, research, technological, educational and extension aspects. The Nutrition Branch will undertake all responsibilities of the Office of Technical Cooperation and Research related to food science, food technology and industrial level food processing and engineering.

The Branch will provide services within TCR and to all of A.I.D. in the above fields through the following functions:

a. Programming;

b. Research;

c. Technical Services.

The programming function will be carried out in close cooperation with the Regional Bureaus, with Missions abroad, and with the Office of Material Resources; cooperative efforts will be established with the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, and Health, Education and Welfare, the Peace Corps, the Office of Food for Peace, the Alliance for Progress (Operation Ninos), the Voluntary Relief Agencies, the UN Agencies, etc.

Attention will be given to the following types of programming:

-- Educating the mother in the nutritional needs of her child and in the better use of food resources available to her, in both urban and rural environments. In conjunction with community development activities, expand the nutrition education component, involving the training of teachers, extension workers, Peace Corps volunteers and A.I.D. and Food for Peace officers. Such activities will be integrated into school lunch programs, food distribution schemes, maternal and child health centers, etc.

-- Nutrition training and research in universities including medical schools, schools of public health and schools of home economics.

-- Working with U.S. A.I.D. Missions to develop and strengthen within host governments institutes of nutrition, food science and food technology, including training and fellowship programs for

senior personnel and also the designing and equipping of laboratories and pilot plants.

-- Formulating plans for acceptibility testing of protein-rich foods in collaboration with Missions, voluntary agencies, host governments, universities, and commercial firms.

-- Supporting efforts by U.S. and other commercial firms to produce, promote and market economical protein-rich and other nutritious foods.

The research function of the Nutrition Branch, carried out in collaboration with the Missions, the Regional Bureaus and other branches of A.I.D. as well as with some of the agencies indicated above, involves development, review, funding and supervision of relevant contracts for research. Contracts will be effected by means of Participating Agency Service Agreements (PASAs) with other agencies of the U.S. Government, by contracts with land grant and other universities, and with other public and private institutions in the U.S. and abroad, including commercial organizations, where appropriate. Research proposals will derive primarily from the policy and program objectives of A.I.D., and as indicated by field programming experience. The following are some typical problem areas which will be considered:

-- Clarification of the consequences of malnutrition in the infant and young child on physical and mental development.

-- The role of maternal nutrition in the welfare of the prenatal and postnatal development of the child.

-- Development of industrial and village-scale food-processing methods relevant to socio-economic conditions in developing

countries, for the production of edible protein concentrates, food mixtures and nutritious beverages based on cottonseed, peanut, soy, fish and other local resources.

-- Development and testing of new techniques for enrichment of staple foods with proteins, amino acids, vitamins, and minerals.

-- Development of technological procedures for extending animal milk supplies by means of vegetable proteins and non-protein nitrogen supplements.

-- Use of urea and other synthetic nitrogen sources in combination with forage crops and industrial wastes as feeding materials for stimulating milk production in developing countries.

-- Development of practical and economic methods to mitigate harvesting and storage deterioration (including aflatoxin incidence) in food grains.

-- Improvement by genetic means of protein nutritional value and food acceptability of grains, legumes and other food staples.

-- Long-range studies on production of protein by non-agricultural techniques such as algal pond culture, tissue culture, fermentation, etc.

-- Development of pediatric and clinical testing procedures for assessing the effectiveness of new food mixtures and food enrichment techniques in terms of the needs of children.

-- Development of simple, quality-control criteria (chemical, sanitary, and nutritional) for protein-rich foods suitable for developing countries.

-- Nutrition surveys and refinement of relevant survey techniques in order to more closely define the nutritional status and needs of various population groups and particularly infants and children in developing countries.

-- Developing and testing of techniques in extension education and programming to better influence dietary practices among populations in developing countries.

Technical information will be provided by the Nutrition Branch to all divisions of A.I.D., within its areas of competence. For example, it will advise Material Resources on the technical aspects of food specifications and processing as necessary for the formulation, enrichment, analysis, and testing of foods and food mixtures, which are procured under the Food for Peace Program. The Nutrition Branch will supervise the chemical, biological and pediatric testing of such products. It will make available informational material on nutrition useful for extension programming in the field and for increasing the effectiveness of school lunch programs and of food distribution through maternal and child health centers. The Nutrition Branch will initiate recruitment and screening of survey teams and task forces, as well as consultants and professional staff, as required to develop and supervise, in the context of Missions and country programs, field activities in nutrition, food science and food technology. Briefing of such teams is a collateral responsibility of the Nutrition Branch. The Nutrition Section, Office of International Research, National Institutes of Health, will provide appropriate assistance to these activities.

In collaboration with other branches of TCR and the Agency, the Nutrition Branch will initiate and conduct discussions with commercial food

companies leading to their involvement in developing countries in the processing and marketing of protein-rich and similar protective foods.

In consultation with Mission Directors, field staffs, and bureaus, and on the basis of information provided by Missions, fields surveys and task force groups, the Nutrition Branch may recommend and develop fellowship and training programs in the U.S. for country nationals as necessary to develop competent, professional manpower in various categories of nutrition, food science and technology in countries receiving A.I.D. program assistance.

The Nutrition Branch, as part of its Headquarters and field responsibilities, will be active in initiating and sponsoring technical meetings and seminars relating to these matters. These technical obligations may be assisted by services provided through PASAs with other professional agencies in the Government.

Max Milner
TCR/HS
April 1, 1966